



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**

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## Grand Canyon News Release

**Release date:** Immediate

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**Date:** November 3, 2008

### **Grand Canyon National Park's historic Hermit Road scheduled to reopen Saturday, November 15, 2008 with a dedication ceremony honoring the road and rehabilitation project**

**Grand Canyon, Ariz.** – Grand Canyon National Park's historic Hermit Road will reopen to the public Saturday, November 15, 2008. There will be a ribbon-cutting ceremony honoring the road and rehabilitation project at 1:00 p.m. on the 15<sup>th</sup> at the new shuttle bus stop near the Hermit Road interchange in Grand Canyon Village on the South Rim.

After the dedication ceremony, community members and visitors will be invited to walk and ride their bikes along the new road. Shuttle buses will also be providing limited services along Hermit Road from after the ceremony until 6:00 p.m.

The rehabilitation of Hermit Road, located on the South Rim between Grand Canyon Village and Hermits Rest, began this past February to

address safety issues and accessibility and to preserve the historic integrity of the road. The project included widening and resurfacing the road to a consistent width of 24 feet; improving



The new Hermit Road still maintains its historic character, but is now safer for all users.

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the shuttle bus stops at each of the overlooks; providing more accessible pedestrian routes from the shuttle bus stops and parking areas to the viewpoints; constructing a new shuttle bus shelter at the Hermit Road interchange; and improving approximately five and a half miles of rim trails, including construction of a new three-mile, multi-use Greenway Trail for bicyclists and pedestrians.

“The National Park Service is really excited to reopen this popular, historic road with a new and improved look for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy,” said Grand Canyon National Park Superintendent Steve Martin. “People can now safely and comfortably enjoy and contemplate the scenic beauty of the Grand Canyon from Hermit Road via foot, bicycle or bus. This project illustrates how we can improve the infrastructure of the park to meet current demands and standards, while still protecting the Canyon’s resources.”

Hermit Road is a popular destination for approximately one million visitors each year. The seven-mile road includes nine overlooks, access to the historic Hermits Rest and Hermit Trailhead, and popular spots for sunset viewing.

The Santa Fe Land Improvement Company constructed the first road to Hermits Rest (known as Hermit Rim Road) between 1911 and 1913. The Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) and the National Park Service (NPS) designed and constructed the current road between 1934 and 1935. It is an early example of the cooperative agreement between the NPS and BPR to build quality roads within national parks for automobiles. Although the 1935 Hermit Road was constructed as a scenic drive that could withstand automobile travel, it was not built to handle the volume of traffic and heavier vehicles seen today. Even with periodic maintenance over the years, the road



The new Greenway Trail gives visitors more opportunities to connect with the Canyon.

had deteriorated to a point where it was unsafe for various user groups, such as bicyclists and pedestrians.

In addition to safety and accessibility, protecting the historical integrity of Hermit Road was an important aspect to this project. The original metal hand railings at each of the overlooks and the rustic-style stone masonry culvert headwalls and retaining walls were

retained. Most of the Greenway Trail follows the alignment of the 1913 Hermit Rim Road.

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Minimizing disturbance to the natural and cultural environment and restoring damaged areas was another significant aspect of the Hermit Road project. Areas were restored that had been damaged by social trailing and other impacts. To better protect a rare plant population and adjacent suitable habitat, the parking area and access-road pavement was removed from Maricopa Point. A new Maricopa Point shuttle bus stop was created west of the rehabilitated parking lot, and a new accessible pedestrian path was built to Maricopa Point.

Visitors have had limited access to Hermit Road and associated areas since April due to the rehabilitation project. After November 15, shuttle bus service will not resume on the road until March 1, 2009. Private vehicles will be allowed to drive on Hermit Road starting November 16, 2008 through February 28, 2009. Commercial tours on Hermit Road provided by Xanterra South Rim, L.L.C. will also resume November 16. For tour information, please contact Xanterra at 888-297-2757 or visit their Web site at <http://www.grandcanyonlodges.com/>

The NPS utilized fee revenues from the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) to complete the Hermit Road rehabilitation. This project was a collaborative effort by various private and public entities. Construction was performed by Fann Contracting, Inc. out of Prescott, Arizona. Project oversight and construction management was performed by the Central Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration. The Grand Canyon Trail Crew, with the assistance of the Student Conservation Association (SCA) and American Conservation Experience (ACE) crews, worked on portions of the Rim Trail and provided stone masonry and viewing area improvements at some of the viewpoints. And the Grand Canyon Revegetation Staff assisted with restoration work at the overlooks and along the entire road with help from SCA, ACE and Sierra Club volunteers.

For more information about the Hermit Road rehabilitation project, please contact Vicky Stinson, Project Manager, at 928-774-3026. For more information about visiting Grand Canyon National Park, go to the park's Web site at <http://www.nps.gov/grca> or call (928) 638-7888.

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